Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph at page 1, lines 6-8 with the following amended paragraph:

This application is a continuation-in-part of ~~US serial~~ U.S. Application Serial No. ~~number~~ 09/664,704, filed September 19, 2000, now abandoned, which is a continuation of International Application No. PCT/CA99/00236, filed March 19, 1999, which claims priority from ~~US~~ U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/078,780, filed March 19, 1998.

Please replace the paragraph at page 12, line 15 to page 13, line 5 with the following amended paragraph:

Zero-time absorbance measurement is triggered after the antibody reagent is dispensed, with the dispensing stem attached to the tip. In another embodiment of the invention, the tip holder has a sliding lid, which closes after the antibody reagent is dispensed, and after the dispensing stem releases the tip. The effect of interferents can be substantially removed by subtracting the first derivative of the absorbance at zero time from the first derivative of absorbance after a two-minute incubation at 37°C. It will be understood that other times and incubation temperatures can be used. In this design, the sample holder functions as both the incubator and the optical read station. It will be understood that the incubation can occur in a separate chamber, where the incubated sample can be aspirated into a disposable dispensing tip, which is subsequently placed in the tip holder 98 as shown in Figure 1. If a separate incubation chamber is used, the same read station or tip holder 98, as shown in Figure 1, can be used for both interferent and protein measurements. If a combined incubator-read station is used, then a separate tip holder is required for measuring interferents, and

a separate set of optical fibres and shutters are required to supply and receive radiation to and from the "incubator-read station." If it is desired to have the dispensing stem remain with the dispensing tip, a second dispensing stem can be added to the apparatus. A second dispensing stem can accommodate a second dispensing tip shown as 4 in Figure 3, or the second dispensing stem can be a nondisposable sample probe which, like the second dispensing tip (4 in Figure 3), can extend up to the length of the lumen of the first dispensing tip. By dispensing stem it is meant a ~~female~~ male part of a dispenser that can become attached to dispensing tips as shown in Figure 3 as 1 and 4. It should be understood that the dispensing stem can be configured as a sample probe, for example but not limited to a cannula, if a non-disposable dispensing tip is desired.